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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. KRENKEL	(Austria)
later:	Mr. DEKANY (Vice-Chairman)	(Hungary)
later:	Mr. KRENKEL (Chairman)	(Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 93: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/47/214-E/1992/50, A/47/216-E/1992/43, A/47/339, 349, 369, and 415; A/C.3/47/4)

(b) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/47/80-S/23502, A/47/87, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/232-S/24025 and Corr.1, A/47/312-S/24238, A/47/339, 344, 349, A/47/356-S/24367, A/47/369, 379, 381, 391, 399 and Corr.1 and 415)

1. Mr. OUATTARA (Mali) said that his country welcomed the increased attention which the United Nations was devoting to the world social situation, with its focus on people.

2. With regard to the question of ageing, Malian society accorded great respect to the elderly, since their precious knowledge made them living libraries in a society where the oral tradition remained the principal means of transmitting knowledge. Two important events had marked a new approach to the question of ageing in his country. First, a national seminar on the elderly had issued a final document, based on the International Plan of Action on Ageing, proposing a series of measures in the areas of the family, social protection, health, nutrition, housing, the environment, culture, education, income and employment. Second, a new ministry had just been established with the responsibility, inter alia, of elaborating a national strategy for the elderly.

3. Mali had established a national mechanism for the elderly, but its initiatives would remain limited without international support. His Government endorsed the global targets on ageing for the next decade, and had co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 46/91. Mali was determined to build a society where all healthy older persons could fully realize their potential.

4. Mr. MAZLAN (Malaysia) said that the root cause of social problems was the lack of resources to improve conditions caused by lack of economic development. Widespread poverty, especially in developing countries, was the dominant problem confronting efforts to improve social development, and its prevalence made the fulfilment of democracy difficult, affecting the stability of the international community. On the other hand, some nations had embarked on economic development programmes at the cost of social development. For example, people had been uprooted in the search for jobs and social mobility, and that had weakened traditional family structures. The negative side of rapid economic development unaccompanied by social development could be witnessed in the growth of shanty towns and slums in developing countries where social services were overburdened.

(Mr. Mazlan, Malaysia)

5. Clearly, economic development and social progress must go hand in hand in order to guarantee the social cohesion and political stability required for sustained economic development. A world summit on social development would provide the international community with an historic opportunity to establish a programme of action to achieve its common goals. His delegation agreed that the agenda for the summit should concentrate on the root causes of social problems, their interrelationship and the balance needed between economic, political and social factors such as poverty, unemployment, social cohesion, democracy and human rights.

6. Poverty alleviation was among the foremost issues being faced, and Malaysia felt strongly that strong Government commitment was required in that area. The major constraint on government efforts to overcome poverty was limited resources. The end of the cold war had offered the possibility of reducing military budgets and devoting those resources to economic and social development. The World Bank had estimated that some $45 billion could become available as a result of the easing of tensions, which could have a significant impact on global efforts to alleviate poverty.

7. The summit should also address the effect of debt on government efforts to raise standards of living. A formula might include debt forgiveness and more favourable terms of repayment. The effects of the unfavourable world trade environment should also be discussed. The South had emphasized repeatedly that it could only be freed from poverty and underdevelopment if unfavourable terms of trade, protectionism, fluctuating rates of exchange and high interest rates were eliminated. The completion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations was only the beginning of reform of the world economic order.

8. It must be recognized that economic and social problems also resulted from political mismanagement by some Governments, which did not feel compelled to respect the will of the people and to adhere to the tenets of democracy. The relationship between democracy, human rights, economic development, poverty alleviation and social development must also be explored.

9. Employment was another major concern, especially in relation to youth issues. Research had indicated that population growth was greater in regions experiencing economic stagnation than in regions with a growing economy, and the largest portion of the world's youth population was found in developing countries. A country's youth represented potential growth, but if resources were lacking for youth programmes, no amount of planning would ensure that such programmes were implemented.

10. As a result of the lack of basic social services, problems such as crime, drugs and alcoholism were corroding social cohesion and undermining societal standards and respect for authority. In an increasingly interdependent world, such social deterioration must be prevented. To ensure the success of the social summit, Member States should work closely together, guided by the spirit of consensus.

11. Ms. ESTEFAN (United States of America) said that the United Nations had moved swiftly and effectively to implement General Assembly resolution 46/152 transferring authority for crime prevention and criminal justice from the expert Committee on Crime Prevention and Control to the intergovernmental Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, under the authority of the Economic and Social Council. The new Commission, which had held its first session in Vienna in April 1992, faced the challenge of involving Governments in implementing its resolutions and of focusing the work of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch so that its activities reflected the Commission's priorities.

12. the Commission had already taken some important steps towards pragmatic assistance to Member States. It had developed resolutions charting the overall purposes of the programme, the budgetary changes resulting from its establishment, and the importance of coordinating disparate activities. Her Government believed that, in establishing priority themes for the work of the Crime Branch, the Commission had made a crucial contribution. Implementing the decisions arrived at in Versailles and in Vienna would take discipline and commitment. The Crime Branch had undertaken an assessment of United Nations activities in that field, and would examine areas of overlap and of neglect in order to adjust priorities. Her Government would make every effort to ensure that the Commission developed the energy and focus needed to meet the enormous challenge at hand.

13. Mr. CHETCUTI (Malta) said that the question of youth was receiving special attention from his Government. A ministry responsible for youth had been established in 1992, along with a National Youth Council. That Council had drafted a charter on the rights of youth for submission to the Government. The Council believed that the objectives of a national youth policy should include opportunities for a constructive role in nation building, leadership development, technical and vocational training, the development of creativity and the fostering of self-reliance.

14. The Commission for Social Development would consider a draft of a world programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond in addition to activities to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year in 1995. The National Youth Council of Malta proposed the adoption of a General Assembly resolution enshrining the rights of youth, similar to those concerning the rights of women, children and the ageing, and laying down a universal definition of the term "youth". The adoption of a youth-rights charter would be all the more appropriate, since the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year would coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. An international youth day, could be proclaimed as well. Member States should be encouraged to establish regional youth councils, and youth affairs should be coordinated by one United Nations agency. More emphasis was needed on youth exchange programmes, and a world institute of youth studies could be established to examine international affairs from that perspective. More attention should be paid to hunger from the viewpoint of its effects on the young. The establishment of an international youth card should also be considered.

15. Ms. KRASIKOVA (Ukraine) noted that the United Nations had devoted much attention recently to social and humanitarian issues. The report of the Secretary-General on global targets on ageing for the year 2001 (A/47/339), his report on policies and programmes involving youth (A/47/349), and his report on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/47/415) offered an in-depth analysis of those social problems and recommendations as to how to solve them.

16. The year 1992 marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, and of the adoption of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The efforts of the Commission for Social Development and other United Nations organs to coordinate those programmes were commendable. However, the current international situation demanded new, more energetic steps. Ukraine supported the proposal to hold a world summit for social development.

17. It was extremely important to determine which items should be included in the agenda for the summit. Topics should include inter alia, means of providing populations with food, shelter and medical care, the elimination of illiteracy, demographic policies, and the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex. The year 1995, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, would be an appropriate year to hold the summit.

18. Regional conferences such as the upcoming conference of ministers of social affairs to be held in Bratislava in 1993 were an important step in the preparation of the world summit for social development. Those measures should help countries to create better social policies at the national level, and bring about a more equitable social climate, creating a safer and more stable life for mankind.

19. In an era of technological revolution and the internationalization of trade and finance, crime - particularly organized crime - was threatening the stability of Governments as well as social and economic development. Despite the achievements of the United Nations in the area of strengthening international cooperation in combating organized crime, many Governments were of the opinion that the crime rate was growing beyond the capabilities of the Organization. New forms of economic crime such as money laundering, drug trafficking, the sale of illegal arms and terrorism demanded special efforts on the part of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and close coordination with the other organs and organizations of the United Nations system. In order to achieve results in the fight against organized crime, the entire world community needed to become involved.

20. Eastern European countries, and in particular Ukraine, were experiencing a difficult period for social development. A balance needed to be maintained between economic development and social welfare. In the midst of an economic crisis, her Government was adopting policies to protect the most vulnerable

(Ms. Krasikova, Ukraine)

segments of the population. New legislation had been enacted on pensions for the elderly, the protection of disabled people, social welfare of the victims of the Chernobyl disaster, the rehabilitation of victims of political repression and increased minimum social benefits for workers. Legislation was currently being drafted on the status of war and labour veterans to ensure their social welfare, and large-scale programmes were being worked out to tackle the problems of the disabled and the social status of women and families.

21. Over the past decade, Ukraine had had the highest rate of ageing of the population of all the former Soviet republics, due primarily to a continuous drop in the birth rate. In 1990, Ukraine had introduced pension reform and in October 1991, indexation of social security benefits. The current budget did not sufficiently provide for social security payments, which in the second half of 1991 had represented 50 billion roubles. Nearly 14 million elderly people and unskilled workers, approximately one third of the population of Ukraine, were receiving social security benefits of some type. New measures to protect the social welfare of the population had had little effect on the overall standard of living, however, as they could not counteract the effects of the transition to a market economy where some prices were unregulated.

22. New legislation had also been adopted in the area of employment. Three hundred and fifty thousand jobs had been reserved for individuals who could not compete in the labour market. Almost 150,000 new jobs had been created, and programmes were in place for training workers for new jobs and increasing their skills. In the first half of 1991, 234,000 people had come to employment centres seeking work. More than half had been provided with jobs, while 9,900 had been registered as unemployed and had received unemployment benefits. There were currently 21,700 unemployed. The current labour market was worse than had been expected owing to delays in the setting up of free-market mechanisms, and more unemployment was predicted for 1992. The question of becoming a party to two ILO conventions was currently under consideration.

23. Ukraine had a particular problem involving the expected return to Crimea of persons deported during the period of Stalinism. Approximately 500,000 Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Armenians, Germans and people of other nationalities were expected to return to Crimea. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the weight of political, financial, organizational and other problems of those populations had fallen on Ukraine and the Republic of Crimea. Approximately 7 billion roubles would be allocated to create cities, housing and jobs and to provide material assistance to the returnees.

24. No matter how difficult the transition to a market economy, Ukraine and the autonomous Republic of Crimea would continue to do everything possible to ensure that justice was restored to those peoples. In order to ensure the social well-being of the population, it was necessary to implement effective economic reforms and surmount the current economic crisis.

25. Mr. KHOSHROO (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation wished to comment on Economic and Social Council resolutions 1992/22, 1992/23 and 1992/24 on crime prevention and criminal justice. The various types of crime in developing and developed countries needed to be analysed in depth. The roots of crime were mostly to be found in cultural and economic poverty, which were preventable through a responsible approach to morality and development.

26. Organized crime, which had become powerful enough to threaten stable Governments, was a world-wide problem, the solution of which required all-inclusive, shared responsibility. Integrated planning should encompass the provision of widespread education, the raising of consciousness about social, religious and family values in order to increase the power of formal and informal means of social control, and the training of law-enforcement officials along with measures to deprive potential criminals of the advantages of their proceeds. In the field of drug trafficking, economic development and substitute employment for growers, producers and traffickers, together with attempts by industrialized countries to curb their distribution, were among the first steps to be taken in combating organized crime.

27. His Government was combating the drug problem with all its power, and hoped that close cooperation with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, combined with the assistance of neighbouring countries, would enable it to cope with that most dangerous plague. His Government also supported efforts to strengthen the United Nations database on crime prevention and criminal justice. Databases on stolen art objects and on drug trafficker networks deserved particular attention.

28. His Government was ready to exchange its experience and information with interested Governments, particularly neighbouring countries, and United Nations entities in accordance with resolutions of the Council. His Government had established a national committee on crime prevention within the traditional system which was focusing its work on juvenile justice and amendment of the criminal code. That committee stressed the need to promote bilateral agreements for the extradition of criminals so as to establish the certainty of punishment.

29. With the recent increase in the number of Central Asian States, it was essential to address crime prevention in that region, bearing in mind the cultural similarity, existing regional cooperation and particularly, the growing threat of drug trafficking there. The establishment of a new United Nations subregional institute in that part of Asia could make a significant contribution, particularly through close cooperation with the United Nations Asia and Far-East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEL) in Japan and the Arab Security Studies and Training Centre in Saudi Arabia. His Government had also offered to act as the liaison in Central Asia for Interpol, so as to broaden the exchange of information between the Islamic Republic of Iran and neighbouring countries and to help detect the movement of criminals, especially drug smugglers. His Government

(Mr. Khoshroo, Islamic Republic of Iran)

looked forward to consideration of that proposal at the Asian Regional Interpol meeting to be held in Tehran in 1993 and was anxious to develop that issue with concerned States and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. His country also looked forward to closer cooperation with its partners in the Economic Cooperation Organization in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

30. Preparations for the Ninth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to be held in 1995 required two important components. Firstly, the need for early publication of relevant documentation to be circulated in advance of the regional preparatory meetings. He commended the Secretariat's initiative to prepare a discussion guide for submission to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its second session on the topics of the Ninth Congress, and the draft rules of procedure for the Ninth Congress, reflected in the Secretary-General's report (A/47/399, para. 71).

31. Secondly, all entities and organizations concerned, particularly the non-governmental organizations, professional and academic interest groups from around the world, should contribute to the preparations for the Ninth Congress. The Islamic Republic of Iran, whose offer to host the Ninth Congress had been taken under consideration by the Council, wished to announce its readiness as a member of the Commission to work seriously and cooperate fully with the Commission's members to reach a comprehensive provisional agenda for the Congress on the basis of consensus.

32. Mr. Dekany (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

33. Mrs. KHANUM (Bangladesh) said that the issue of social development, neglected during the cold war era, had emerged as a new challenge. Progress in that area depended, however, on improved economic conditions. Socio-economic inequalities between rich and poor had grown in recent decades, both between nations and within them.

34. The challenges for social development in Bangladesh were typical of those of the least developed countries. The Government was committed to improving the standard of living, primarily by meeting basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. Poverty alleviation, employment generation and self-reliance through human resources development were the main objectives of the current five-year plan. Social projects were mainly geared to rural groups - the landless, small farmers, women, young people and the disabled - with emphasis on community participation through local planning and resource mobilization. A programme for comprehensive village development had been launched, as had a programme for compulsory primary education aiming at universal coverage by the year 2000. Adult literacy and vocational training programmes were integral components of the human development strategy. The Government had also accepted the global target of "health for all by the year 2000" as the

(Mrs. Khanum, Bangladesh)

national health goal, with particular emphasis on women and children. In order to ensure optimum resource utilization, high priority was placed on coordination among the relevant ministries and bodies, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

35. Bangladesh reaffirmed its total commitment to the welfare of disabled persons, fully endorsing the Secretary-General's recommendation for a long-term national affirmative action plan for the period 1993-2002.

36. While the problems relating to ageing had not yet become acute in Bangladesh because elderly persons enjoyed an elevated status in the family and society, her country recognized the need to integrate elderly people into development as beneficiaries and active agents.

37. Concerted action at all levels was essential in mobilizing the potential of young people. In Bangladesh, where young people made up one third of the population, a national youth policy had been adopted, with specific education, skills development, employment, leisure and community participation programmes. Dialogue and exchange programmes between national and international youth organizations were also encouraged. Bangladesh was grateful to the Austrian Government for assisting it in providing employment opportunities to many young people.

38. The optimism following the end of East-West tensions was fading, and concerted international efforts were needed to sustain the trend towards democracy, the prerequisite for which was to establish the conditions for sustainable socio-economic development. The task of transforming societies to ensure equal opportunities for all called for a well-articulated and coordinated global programme of action involving national governments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations, including the United Nations. Political direction was required at the highest level. Her delegation therefore fully supported the proposal for holding a world summit for social development in 1995 and stood ready to participate from the preparatory stage.

39. While supporting international efforts, she believed that responsibility for social improvement lay primary with Governments. However, the least developed countries were not in a position to reverse the current trend in the absence of a favourable external economic environment and adequate international assistance.

40. Mr. Krenkel (Austria) resumed the Chair.

41. Mrs. AQUINO ORETA (Philippines) said that the social dimension of development, now in sharper focus, called for renewed efforts to halt environmental degradation, control drug abuse, prevent crime, ensure basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and take positive action for the marginalized sectors of society. She accordingly welcomed the scheduled

(Mrs. Aquino Oreta, Philippines)

holding, in the next three years, of the World Conference on Human Rights, the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the Fourth World Conference on Women. She looked forward to the observance of the International Year of the Family in 1994, and particularly welcomed the proposal so commendably initiated by Mr. Somavia, Ambassador of Chile, to hold a world summit for social development in 1995. The Philippine Government had consistently expressed its commitment to the promotion of social justice in all phases of national development.

42. The Philippines policy on disability contained three particularly noteworthy features. The first was its unique response to the challenges of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, with a constitutional provision for the protection of disabled persons, their right to be represented in Congress, and the adoption of a "Magna Carta on Disability" prescribing penalties for discriminatory acts against people with disabilities. The second was the emphasis on the prevention of disability in the relevant programmes and projects, and the third was the active participation of the Philippines in international forums in matters relating to disability, as could be seen from its leading role in sponsoring the Third Committee's resolution on disability and in the adoption of the Economic and Social Council's recent decision to extend the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability.

43. The draft resolution to be submitted at the current session of the General Assembly should reflect the aspirations and priorities of the disabled themselves, reaffirming the right of the disabled to basic human dignity, based on a genuine respect for the intrinsic independence of the human person, as expressed through the provision of equal social and economic opportunities. Furthermore, Governments must take into account the close link between disability and economic and social factors when planning their national programmes on disability, and must commit themselves to implementing those programmes. At the regional level, the Philippines had proposed a study on the possibility of making the concerns of the disabled an area of cooperation among the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

44. The Philippines strategies on ageing had been crafted in the spirit of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, but were based on Filipino culture and family values which stressed interdependence, closely-knit family ties and extended kinship. Only 3 per cent of the aged in the Philippines lived alone or in homes for the aged.

45. Young people still constituted a marginalized and vulnerable sector of society, especially in developing countries. Many of those countries had encountered difficulties in implementing the guidelines for planning youth programmes and policies, which, in the current economic context, had tended to be subordinated to other priorities. In addition to the constitutional provision for the promotion and protection of young people's well-being, a

(Mrs. Aquino Oreta, Philippines)

plan of action entitled "The Filipino Children: 2,000 and Beyond" had been adopted in January 1992. The Plan of Action was consistent with the country's commitment to the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

46. As a sponsor of the General Assembly resolution on the convening of a world summit for social development, the Philippines committed itself to participating actively in the preparations and offered to host a regional meeting to that end.

47. Mrs. OLSZOWSKI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the idea of an equitable, sustainable and human-centred form of development had gained wide acceptance, reflected in the proposed convening of a world summit for social development which, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and together with the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women should lead to a better integration of the economic and social goals of the United Nations system and improve coordination of the strategies of its component organizations. Integrated social policy and social planning had UNESCO's constant concern.

48. At a time when Member States expected the specialized agencies to develop their advisory services, the work of the world commissions recently set up under the auspices of UNESCO would assume great importance. The World Commission on Culture and Development established by UNESCO, focusing on a new approach to development, responded to a major challenge of the next century, since one of the areas on which the world summit for social development was to be focused was the promotion of social cohesion, and development with a cultural dimension was a high priority for developing countries.

49. Another world commission established by UNESCO, on education for the twenty-first century, would formulate practical recommendations on renewing all levels and aspects of education and would try to answer the basic question: what kind of education for what kind of society? It had recently been agreed that another commission, on population and human quality of life, would be established under UNESCO's auspices; its conclusions and recommendations would make a decisive contribution to the preparation of the proposed world summit for social development.

50. A feasibility study currently under consideration by UNESCO's governing bodies pointed to the desirability of establishing an intergovernmental social science programme within the Organization. Such a programme, which should be well-focused and realistic, responded to UNESCO's unique mandate within the United Nations system in the field of the social sciences. It would help foster international cooperation, scientific and institutional capacities and policy relevance, respond to the need for social science research as an

(Mrs. Olszowski, UNESCO)

essential input into social and cultural development and reinforce national research, training and information capacities and exchanges. The feasibility of such a programme was also based on the proven effectiveness of other UNESCO-sponsored intergovernmental programmes.

51. UNESCO's contribution to United Nations action in promoting social and humanitarian programmes also included its preparatory activities for the International Year of the Family, to which it had given great prominence.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.